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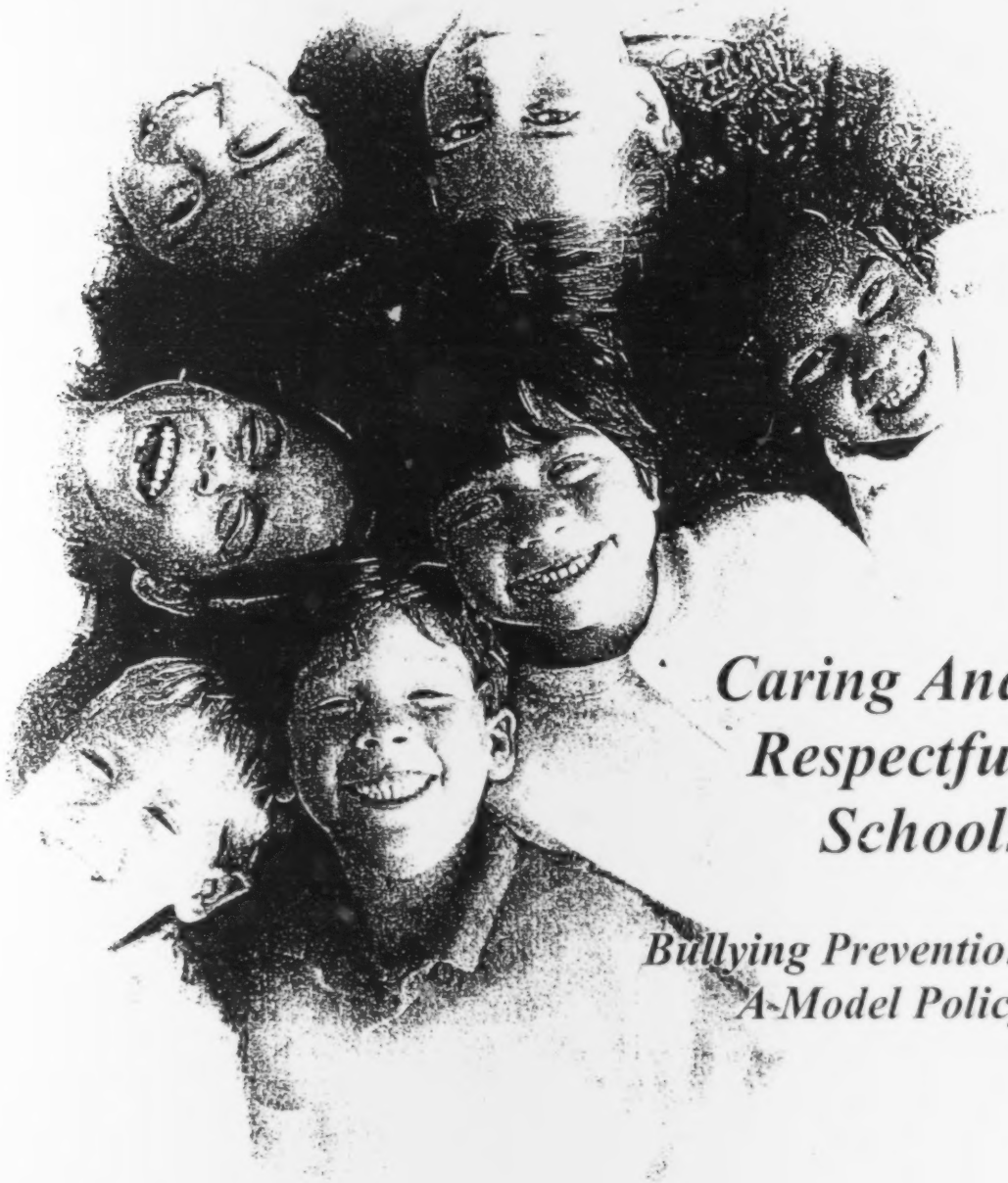

Caring And Respectful Schools

Bullying Prevention A Model Policy

September, 2006

Saskatchewan Learning
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Message from the Minister of Learning

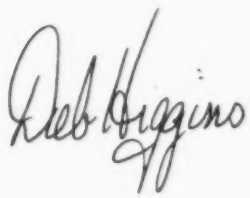
Saskatchewan Learning is committed to promoting caring, respectful and safe schools for all children and young people. As Minister of Learning, I believe that they are essential for Saskatchewan's children and youth to learn and to achieve healthy personal and social development.

I believe that bullying is a community problem and a serious matter that interferes with learning success and well-being of children and youth. The consequences of bullying are wide ranging not just for students, but for schools, families and communities. It is for these reasons that Saskatchewan Learning announced, on February 2, 2005, a province-wide *Anti-bullying Strategy* to focus attention on the issue of bullying and to ensure that schools and school divisions across the province have policies and practices in place that promote care, respect and safety.

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to work with educators, students, parents and the broader community to prevent bullying in our schools and communities. As part of Saskatchewan Learning's *Anti-Bullying Strategy*, I am pleased to present *Caring and Respectful Schools: Bullying Prevention: A Model Policy*, a resource to support school divisions in strengthening their current polices and practices to prevent bullying.

I am confident that school divisions across the province will continue to ensure that our schools remain places where students and staff alike have the right to learn and work free from harm and bullying.

I want to recognize the teachers, school divisions, and education partners who participated in the development of this new model policy. Your commitment and input is much appreciated.



Honourable Deb Higgins

Acknowledgments

Saskatchewan Learning gratefully acknowledges the teachers and school division personnel who reviewed drafts and provided advice and feedback over the course of the development of *Caring and Respectful Schools: Bullying Prevention: A Model Policy.*

Key educational partner organizations and others have also contributed to the completion of this resources including

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit
Saskatchewan School Boards Association
Saskatchewan Department of Community Resources
Saskatchewan Department of Justice
The Children's Advocate Office

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Introduction

In February 2005, the Minister of Learning, Honourable Andrew Thomson, announced a province-wide *Anti-Bullying Strategy*. The strategy builds on Saskatchewan Learning's *Caring and Respectful Schools Initiative*. It aims to focus attention on the issue of bullying and to increase momentum and capacity for reducing problems of bullying in our schools and communities.

The *Anti-Bullying Strategy* developed by Saskatchewan Learning is guided by the following principles:

Guiding Principles

- Care, Respect and Safety
- Collective Responsibility and Accountability
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Youth Voice

Care, Respect and Safety

- Caring, respectful and safe school environments are essential for children and young people to learn and to achieve healthy personal and social development. All Saskatchewan's children and youth have a right to an education free from all forms of bullying.

Collective Responsibility and Accountability

- Bullying is a community problem and solutions to prevent bullying require community-wide involvement. Community members and organizations, local support agencies, human service providers and the police working with schools can identify common needs and work together to develop community-based solutions that strengthen caring, respectful and safe communities and schools. Regular review of bullying prevention policies and related practices is necessary to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

Prevention and Early Intervention

- Bullying is a serious problem that has a negative impact on the learning success and well-being of children and young people. Prevention and early intervention are key to reducing problems of bullying. To be successful, school divisions and schools must make the prevention of bullying a priority and involve the school community in the development of policies and procedures to address this problem. Comprehensive prevention and early intervention strategies include education and awareness; assessment and evaluation; empirically-based interventions; and policy development.

Youth Voice

- The involvement of children and youth in preventing and reducing bullying is critical. Educators and community leaders must listen to and consult with youth on matters related to bullying and engage them in the development of policies and practices related to the reduction and prevention of bullying.

This document provides a model policy to support school divisions in implementing the anti-bullying strategy.

School divisions recognize that bullying in schools is a complex community problem. A policy does very little to address the problem of bullying if there is no plan to link the policy to effective school and community practices.

Background

During April and May 2005, school divisions across the province were surveyed to determine the current status of practices promoting caring and respectful school environments and specific policies that address the problem of bullying in schools. The completed surveys provided evidence that school divisions recognize that bullying is a complex community problem that is best addressed within the context of a positive and safe school environment supported by a continuum of broad-based prevention and early intervention services and supports.

School divisions across the province have policies and practices in place. While the nature of the policies varies, by and large, school divisions have established policies to address harassment, bullying and violence.

The model policy outlined in this document is provided in response to school divisions' requests for an accepted definition of bullying and a model policy to enable school divisions to work toward maintaining a common approach to the prevention of bullying.

Legislative and Policy Context

The *Anti-Bullying Strategy* was developed in accordance with the rights and responsibilities relating to children and young persons articulated in *The Education Act, 1995*, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* , *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993*, *The Child and Family Services Act* and the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The strategy also recognizes the provisions of the *Criminal Code* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (2003) that apply to these situations.

Saskatchewan Learning's *Caring and Respectful Schools Initiative* provides the conceptual framework for promoting positive and safe school environments. The provincial Core Curriculum and the Common Essential Learning of Personal and Social Development are intended to provide all Saskatchewan students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for healthy personal and social development and life success.

The Child and Family Services Act incorporates provisions relating to children under the age of 12 years who, if they were over the age of 12, would be acting in a manner that constitutes an offence under the *Criminal Code*. The Department of Community Resources and its child protection workers may have a role to play in dealing with children who exhibit bullying behaviour.

The *Criminal Code of Canada* establishes a code of conduct expected of Canadians by making illegal that conduct which harms others. In the context

of bullying, assault or threatening behaviour is prohibited. The *Criminal Code* applies equally to adults and to young persons between the ages of 12 and 18 years.

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act* sets out how the *Criminal* Code is applied to young persons in Canada.

Developing a Bullying Prevention Policy

The creation of a bullying prevention policy is a collaborative process involving the board of education, educators, students, parents/caregivers, School Community Councils and the community at large, including community organizations, local support agencies, human service providers and law enforcement officials.

Answers to the following questions may assist in determining a school's and community's level of readiness and commitment to addressing the problem of bullying.

- What is the history and context at the division level in relation to issues of bullying?
- What partnerships are needed to help develop a response?
- What is the history and context in the school community related to the issue of bullying?
- Is there leadership within the school community for addressing the problem of bullying?
- What is the best way to create commitment within the school community to addressing the problem of bullying?

Model Policy Format

The following model policy has been written to serve as a resource for school divisions to:

- strengthen existing policies and practices related to the prevention of and intervention with bullying;
- assist restructured school divisions to align their current policies in the area of bullying prevention; and,
- provide a consistent approach for school divisions and schools across the province to prevent, reduce and respond to incidents of bullying.

The model policy provides key components of an effective bullying prevention policy, background information to consider when developing or strengthening a policy in this area and sample language where appropriate. While it has been written to address each of the required provisions of an effective bullying prevention policy, it is not intended to preclude a school division from making additional provisions, or from using language and formats that are consistent with their other policies and procedures.

Key Components of a Bullying Prevention Policy

Effective policies promote continuity and ensure that matters are dealt with in a consistent manner. At a minimum, an effective bullying prevention policy will include the following key components:

1. A statement proclaiming the right of all children and youth to a caring, respectful and safe school environment.
2. A definition of bullying.
3. A statement prohibiting bullying.
4. Roles and responsibilities of the board of education, educators, parents, students, School Community Councils and community members for preventing and reducing bullying.
5. A division and school process outlining the steps to be followed when dealing with instances of bullying.
6. An action plan ensuring regular review and evaluation of the bullying prevention policy and related practices.

Each of these components is described in more detail on the pages that follow.

1. A statement proclaiming the right of all children and youth to a caring, respectful and safe school environment

Background

Students and school staff alike have the right to learn and work free from harm and bullying in any form.

- The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) provides a foundation on which to build caring, respectful and safe school environments that are open, inclusive, and culturally affirming. The Convention reinforces the importance of children's and young persons' rights, including the right of education, care, equitable opportunity and freedom from discrimination:

  - Article 2 emphasises that the learning environment for all children and youth be free from all forms of discrimination.
  - Article 12 of the Convention obliges that public authorities, including educators, listen to and consult with youth on matters which impact on them. Therefore, the development of policies and practices related to the prevention and reduction of bullying must be mindful of children's and youths' rights to participation and opportunity for input.
  - Article 19 affirms the right of children and youth to protection from all forms of discrimination and violence.
  - Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention enshrine the right of every child and young person to discipline practices administered in a manner consistent with the individual's human dignity and in conformity to the Convention, and to an education directed to the development of their full potential.
  - Article 34 of the Convention protects children and youth from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

- *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination on the basis of a number of specified grounds, including race, creed, religion, colour, sex, marital status, physical disability, age, nationality, ancestry and place of origin. The *Code* governs relationships between people and speaks to the educational opportunities of children and youth obliging schools to be free of discrimination and to treat all children, young people and adults equally and fairly.

- *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993,* subsection 3 (a) requires that school divisions ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, the

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC)* provides a foundation on which to build caring, respectful and safe school environments that are open, inclusive, and culturally affirming. The Convention reinforces the importance of children's and young persons' rights, including the right of education, care, equitable opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Subsection 4 (a) of the *Act* requires that every worker within a school division take reasonable care to protect his or her health and safety and the health and safety of other workers, and subsection 4 (b) requires that every worker refrain from causing or participating in the harassment of another worker. Subsection 14(1) of the *Act* requires that school divisions develop a policy statement on violence in writing.

Saskatchewan Learning's *Caring and Respectful Schools Initiative* provides the conceptual framework for promoting a positive and safe school environment. Caring and respectful school environments are open, inclusive and culturally affirming. Such environments provide all students with the developmental and learning experiences and supports required to make healthy choices, form positive relationships, handle emotions, resolve conflicts in peaceful ways and prevent bullying.

Sample Language
All students of_____have the right to a caring, respectful and safe school environment that is free from all forms of bullying. All school staff will take steps to prevent bullying and to assist and support students who are being bullied.

2. A definition of bullying

Background

Bullying is a form of repeated aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or group from a position of relative power.

Bullying is not easy to define. Children often play and interact in physical and verbal ways that may appear, on the surface, to be bullying. Play-fighting, rough and tumble play and playful teasing among friends of equal power should not be considered bullying. Such behaviour should be looked upon as part of normal growth and development. It is through such interactions that children learn the skills necessary to make friends, resolve conflicts and develop positive relationships with others (Sullivan, 2000).

Bullying has been described as a destructive relationship problem and is often seen as a precursor to harassment and other forms of violence. Common to an understanding of children who bully others use their age, size, strength, intellectual ability, or peer group status to intentionally and repeatedly control, distress and, in some cases, physically harm others.

Bullying behaviour can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, insults, put-downs), social (e.g., social isolation, gossip) or cyber (e.g., threats, insults or harmful messages spread through the internet). Bullying can be direct, "in your face"

confrontation, or indirect, "behind your back", such as spreading rumours. Bullying can be done by one person or by a group. A child or young person being bullied feels helpless in trying to stop it.

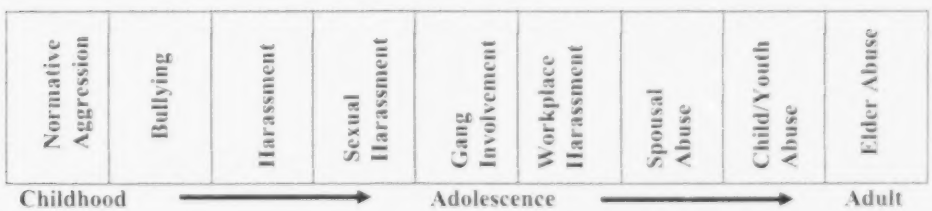
Rigby, Smith and Pepler (2004) note that there is no universally agreed upon definition of bullying. A number of recognized authorities view bullying as follows:

- "A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more persons" (Olweus, 1991).
- "Bullying is longstanding violence, physical or psychological conducted by an individual or a group and directed against an individual who is not able to defend himself in the actual situation." (Roland, 1989).
- "A student is bullied when he or she experiences repeated attacks, over time, by one or more other students who systematically abuse their power. It is characterized by aggressive behaviour or intentional 'harm doing'; repetitive, coercive acts over time without provocation; and interpersonal relationships where the victim is powerless to resist and the bully derives status and gratification" (Canadian Public Health Association and the National Crime Prevention Strategy, 2005).
- "Bullying is a destructive relationship problem where the child who bullies has learned to use power and aggression to control and distress others" (Craig & Pepler, 2005).

A number of children experience problems of bullying and victimization and for most, the problems are transitory in nature. With redirection and support the majority of children develop the personal and social skills necessary to form positive relationships with their peers. For this reason, it is important to avoid labelling children and youth as "bullies", or "victims". Such terms imply permanent or fixed patterns of behaviour. However, research does indicate that a small number of children and youth who frequently bully others or are bullied experience a wide range of problems and are in need of specific interventions and support to develop more positive relationships with their peers (Craig & Pepler, 2000).

Bullying occurs along a developmental continuum of behaviours associated with the combined use of power and aggression. It is a problem across the life span. Young children who learn to use aggression to gain power and control over others do not grow out of this destructive pattern of interaction on their own. The nature of these problem behaviours changes as children grow older. For some children, this learned pattern of behaviour develops into more sophisticated forms of bullying as they move from elementary through to high school (Hawkins, Pepler, and Craig, 2001).

Developmental Continuum of Bullying: Power and Aggression (adapted from Pepler and Craig, 2000, p. 5)



Sample Language

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour that is repeatedly directed at an individual or group from a position of relative power. Bullying behaviour can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, insults, put-downs), social (e.g., social isolation, gossip) or cyber (e.g., threats, insults or harmful messages spread through the internet). Bullying can be direct, "in your face" confrontation, or indirect," behind your back",such as spreading rumours. Bullying can be done by one person or by a group A child or young person being bullied feels helpless in trying to stop it.

A student is bullied or harassed when he or she is intentionally and repeatedly the target of the negative actions of a stronger or more powerful person or group that cause fear, emotional stress and/or physical harm.

3. A statement prohibiting bullying.

Background

Bullying is best addressed within the context of a caring, respectful and safe school environment supported by a curricular focus on personal and social development of students and a continuum of community-wide prevention and early intervention services and supports.

Bullying interferes with learning success and well-being of children and youth. The consequences of bullying can be long-term and impact not only the children and youth involved but also their families and communities. As a community problem, bullying is best addressed within the context of a caring, respectful and safe school environment supported by a curricular focus on personal and social development of students and a continuum of community-wide prevention and early intervention services and supports. The commitment to a bullying prevention policy requires input and active participation from the board of education, educators, students, parents, community members and service providers to prevent and reduce bullying.

Sample Language

School/School Division believes that bullying is a problem that adversely affects the learning success and well-being of children and youth. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated

4. Roles and responsibilities of the board of education, educators, parents/caregivers, students, the School Community Council and community members for preventing and reducing bullying.

Background

Bullying is a complex problem with far reaching consequences. Comprehensive prevention and early intervention strategies involving participation from all members of the school community are critical to reducing problems of bullying. Successful bullying prevention strategies include components related to education and awareness; assessment and evaluation; empirically-based interventions; and policy development.

Successful bullying prevention strategies include education; assessment; empirically-based interventions; and policy development.

Saskatchewan Learning sets the legislative and policy direction for the provincial education system. *The Education Act, 1995,* gives boards of education responsibility for all aspects of the daily operation of schools. Policies and procedures relating to student behaviour and issues of bullying are the responsibility of boards of education.

- *The Education Act, 1995* outlines the rights and responsibilities of children, youth and adults related to schools. Sections 141-142 of the *Act* affirm the right of all children and young people to attend school and to receive appropriate instruction. Sections 150-155 outline the general duties of students related to attendance and general deportment and hold students accountable for their behaviour at school and for responding to the general discipline of school.

Boards of education, school division administrators, teachers and schools, students, parents/caregivers, School Community Councils, and the community at-large, including community members, organizations, local support agencies and human service providers and law enforcement officials all have a role to play in preventing and reducing bullying.

Boards of Education

Boards of education are the starting point for an effective bullying prevention strategy. Boards of education can support the prevention of bullying by:

- establishing policies that promote caring, respectful and safe school environments;
- including bullying prevention strategies in their strategic planning;
- seeking broad-based input and participation from school administrators, school staff, students, parents, School Community Councils and the wider community in the development of a bullying prevention policy;

- supporting professional development and learning opportunities that promote caring, respectful and safe learning environments and prevent and reduce bullying;
- supporting the use of evidence-based practices to prevent and reduce bullying; and,
- establishing protocols with service providers, support agencies and the police for dealing with instances of bullying that require intensive supports or further investigation.

In-School Administrators are responsible for:

- providing leadership for promoting a caring, respectful and safe school environment;
- implementing a comprehensive bullying prevention strategy in support of the division level policy;
- promoting and participating in professional development and learning opportunities to enhance their ability to promote caring, respectful and safe learning environments and to prevent and reduce problems of bullying;
- surveying teachers/school staff, students, parents and community members to determine the extent and nature of bullying and how effective interventions are at reducing bullying problems;
- encouraging the participation of teachers/school staff, students, parents/caregivers and community members to develop and support a comprehensive school-wide bullying prevention strategy;
- communicating with the teachers about reported incidents of bullying to determine whether it is appropriate to contact the parents/caregivers of the students involved in the incident;
- communicating with classroom teachers about further assistance from school division personnel, appropriate mental health or child protection professionals, and the police, when appropriate;
- keeping a confidential file on bullying incidents and action plans undertaken by the school, parents/caregivers, and student involved;
- supporting the individual or the parent in making a decision to report the incident to the police for further investigation;
- following school division protocols when responses involve suspension, expulsion or the involvement of mental health or child protection professionals or the police; and,
- promoting annual monitoring and review of school level policy and practices to reduce and prevent bullying.

Teachers/School staffs are responsible for:

- participating in the development of a school bullying prevention policy consistent with the division level policy;
- promoting and using caring, respectful and safe school and classroom practices;

- participating in professional development/learning opportunities related to bullying prevention;
- building bullying prevention into daily instruction that encourages students to report incidents of bullying;
- responding promptly and appropriately to instances of bullying;
- communicating with in-school administrators and parents/caregivers about instances of bullying and involve them in seeking solutions;
- recording and reporting instances of bullying to the in-school administrator and monitoring instances of bullying and their resolution;
- determining with in-school administrators whether further assistance from school division personnel, human service providers or the police is warranted and follow school division protocols in these matters; and,
- participating in annual monitoring and review of school level policy and practices to reduce bullying.

Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum and the Common Essential Learning of Personal and Social Development are intended to provide all Saskatchewan students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for healthy personal and social development and life success.

It is important for all teachers to take advantage of every opportunity to embed bullying prevention into their daily classroom instruction.

The following link provides curriculum support illustrating where bullying prevention behaviours can be taught and supported within Saskatchewan Learning curricula.
http://www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca/branches/pol_eval/school_plus/crse/anti_bully.shtml

Students are responsible for:

- respecting the safety, well-being and property of school staff and fellow students;
- contributing to a caring, respectful and safe school and classroom learning environment;
- participating in the development and support of the school's bullying prevention policy;
- taking a personal stand against bullying and participating in bullying prevention activities at the school; and,
- reporting all acts of bullying experienced or observed to a school staff member.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for:

- contributing to a creating a caring, respectful and safe school environment;
- participating in the development and support of the bullying prevention policy;
- working with the school to reduce instances of bullying; and,
- reporting instances of bullying to the school and working with the school to resolve the issue.

School Community Councils are well positioned to play an important role in the development of school level bullying prevention policies and practices in support of school division priorities in this area.

School Community Councils can encourage and facilitate parent and community understanding about bullying and gain commitment to action. School Community Councils can support school improvement plans related to bullying prevention.

School Community Councils are responsible for:

- contributing to a caring, respectful and safe school community;
- encouraging and facilitating parent and community engagement in the development of bullying prevention policies and practices in support of school division priorities in this area;
- supporting implementation of school level policies and practices to reduce instances of bullying;

- assisting in the monitoring and reporting of progress related to the prevention and reduction of bullying; and,
- including bullying prevention strategies within the development of the local learning improvement plan.

Sample Language

School Division/School shares responsibility with in-school administrators, school staff, parents/caregivers, students, the School Community Council and the community at-large to promote caring, respectful and safe school environments and to prevent and reduce bullying. In addition, the policy may define roles and responsibilities such as those outlined above.

5. A school and division process outlining the steps to be followed when dealing with instances of bullying.

Background

Occasional name calling, social exclusion and acts of physical aggression have the potential to escalate. It is important to deal with these unacceptable behaviours immediately. A timely response prevents the escalation of such behaviour and promotes a school culture of care, respect and safety.

All instances of bullying are serious and need to be dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion. Children and youth who are bullied need protection and support. They need to know they have a right to be safe and not bullied at school, and that it is important for them to report bullying when it occurs. Children and youth need assurance that all reported and observed instances of bullying will be taken seriously, and that the in-school administration and all school staff will do everything possible to put a stop to this harmful behaviour.

Students who bully others need to be held accountable for their behaviour. Consequences for bullying must provide a clear message that bullying is unacceptable. Students who bully others need opportunities to learn the skills necessary to develop more positive relationship skills. Consequences for bullying need to take into account the developmental and maturity level of the students involved, the severity of the behaviour, the context and history of the behaviour (frequency and duration), and legal consequences of the behaviour. All actions taken in response to bullying must be consistent with the school and division policies and procedures.

Bullying and the Law

While there are instances of bullying that do not fall within the context of criminal law and are not considered criminal behaviour, there are cases that may qualify as criminal offences given the broad definition of threatening behaviour, criminal harassment, assault and sexual assault.

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YJCA)* holds youth ages 12 to 17 years accountable and legally responsible for their criminal behaviour. Those 18 and over are held responsible as adults under the criminal code. The restorative approach of the *YCJA* and the use of "extrajudicial measures" provide an opportunity to support, as well as, hold the young person accountable for their behaviour without proceeding with a formal charge. While children under 12 cannot be charged for criminal actions, their actions may be grounds for child protection intervention and or other social or mental health intervention.

Actions considered as bullying in younger children may be considered criminal offences for older youth. Threats to cause harm or to kill, physical assaults, assault using a weapon and sexual assault qualify as criminal offences and must be reported to the police or to the Department of Community Resources for investigation. In cases where bullying qualifies as a criminal offence, decisions to involve the police or the Department of Community Resources may originate with the victim, parents or school authorities. The police or Department of Community Resources officials are responsible for determining if the reported behaviour merits further investigation or action.

All reports of child sexual abuse must be reported; sexual assaults regardless of the age of the victim or offender must be reported.

Answers to the following questions will help in assessing the severity of an incident of bullying and can assist in determining the appropriate response.

- **Severity:** The nature of the act needs to be taken into account. Name calling, for example, although hurtful, is less severe than a physical attack or assault causing harm or injury. Take into account answers to these questions: Does the incident require an immediate response? How serious is the emotional and physical impact on the person bullied or harassed? How serious is the impact on the school community? Who else needs to be informed?

- **Frequency and duration:** How many times has this occurred between the individuals/groups? Have similar incidents been reported in the past week, month? How have these incidents been handled in the past? What was the outcome of past interventions?

- **Consequences: Child Protection**: Does the behaviour warrant a report to the Department of Community Resources for investigation of protection or abuse issues?
    - **Mental Health**: Does the behaviour warrant referral to mental health professionals for counselling and or support?
    - **Legal**: Might the behaviour qualify as a criminal offence? Do the police or Department of Community Resources need to be involved?

Sample Language

When bullying occurs or is reported, the following steps will be taken:

1. *The in-school administration, classroom teachers and school staff will respond by providing a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated.*
2. *All instances of bullying are to be reported to the in-school administration and the classroom teacher(s) directly involved with the students.*
3. *The in-school administration or classroom teacher(s) will listen, investigate, offer support and determine the appropriate course of action.*
4. *A bullying incident report will record those involved and the action taken and be filed with the in-school administration.*
5. *In a timely fashion, the classroom teacher(s) will communicate with the in-school administration and, if appropriate, contact the parent/caregivers of each student involved, to inform them of the incident.*
6. *The classroom teacher(s) will monitor the action plan, keep the in-school administration and parents/caregivers informed and update the filed report if the incident has been resolved.*
7. *When efforts to stop the bullying are unsuccessful, the in-school administration or the classroom teacher(s) will request separate meetings with the parents/caregivers of each child involved, and suggest further supports and consequences to resolve the problem.*
8. *The in-school administration will follow division protocols when consequences for bullying involve suspensions or expulsions, or when follow-up includes a referral to mental health or child protection professionals or the police*
9. *The in-school administration has a responsibility to support the individual or parent in making a decision to involve the police when the incident of bullying may qualify as a criminal offence and to follow school division protocols for such involvement.*
10. *The in-school administration and school staff have a responsibility to report cases of bullying to the police when students' and school staffs' safety is at risk or when they witness an incident of bullying that qualifies as a criminal offence.*

6. An action plan ensuring regular review and evaluation of the bullying policy and related practices

Background

Regular review of the bullying prevention policy and related practices is necessary to ensure that the policy and plan to reduce the problem of bullying is effective.

Reducing problems of bullying is a long-term and ongoing process. It requires the commitment of all the adults in the children's and young person's life, including parents, teachers, and the broader community, including the police. Peers who witness bullying are an essential part of any intervention plan (Pepler, Craig, O'Connell, Atlas, and Charach, 2004).

Successful interventions to reduce problems of bullying at school require teachers'/school staffs' and in-school administrators' commitment to promoting a school climate where bullying is discouraged and where students are actively encouraged to take a stand against bullying by supporting children and youth who are bullied and harassed (Pepler, Smith, and Rigby, 2004).

Regular review of the bullying prevention policy and related practices is necessary to ensure that the policy and plan to reduce the problem of bullying is effective. The use of evidence-based interventions and assessment tools are needed to assess the impact of school-based programs aimed at reducing the problem of bullying and to improve the well-being of children and young people.

The Canadian Public Health Association in partnership with the Canadian Initiative for the Prevention of Bullying (National Crime Prevention Strategy) offers a free toolkit to Canadian schools to measure school-peer relationship problems, standards for quality programs, and a common set of tools to assess the impact of school-based programs. The toolkit can be accessed at http://www.cpha.ca/antibullying/english/backinfo/toolkit.html).

Sample Language

School/School Division will involve teachers, school staff, students, parents, the School Community Council and the community at-large in a regular review of the bullying prevention policy and practices to determine what is working and what needs to be strengthened to reduce problems of bullying.

Appendix A

Bullying Prevention Model Policy – In Brief

1. A statement proclaiming the right of all children and youth to a caring, respectful and safe school environment.

Students of _____ have the right to a caring respectful and safe school environment free from all forms of bullying. All school staff will take steps to prevent bullying and to assist and support students who are being bullied.

2. A definition of bullying.

Bullying is generally identified as a form of aggressive behaviour that is repeatedly directed at an individual or group from a position of relative power. Bullying behaviour can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., name calling, insults, put-downs), social (e.g., social isolation, gossip) or cyber (e.g., threats, insults or harmful messages spread through the internet). Bullying can be direct, "in your face" confrontation, or indirect, " behind your back", such as spreading rumours. Bullying can be done by one person or by a group. A child or young person being bullied feels helpless in trying to stop it.

A student is bullied or harassed when he or she is intentionally and repeatedly the target of the negative actions of a stronger or more powerful person or group that cause fear, emotional stress and/or physical harm.

3. A statement prohibiting bullying.

School Division/School believes that bullying is serious problem that adversely affects the learning success and well-being of children and youth. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

4. Roles and responsibilities of the board of education, educators, parents/caregivers, students, School Community Councils and community members for preventing and reducing bullying.

_____ shares responsibility with in-school administrators, school staff, students, parents and the School Community Council and community members to promote caring, respectful and safe school environment and to prevent and reduce bullying.

5. A school and division process outlining the steps to be followed when responding to instances of bullying.

When bullying occurs or is reported the following steps will be taken to deal with the problem:

1. *The in-school administration, classroom teachers and school staff will respond by providing a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated.*
2. *All instances of bullying are to be reported to the in-school administration and the classroom teacher(s) directly involved with the student.*
3. *The in-school administration or classroom teacher(s) will listen, investigate, offer support and determine the appropriate course of action;*
4. *A bullying incident report will record those involved and the action taken and be filed with the in-school administration.*
5. *In a timely fashion, the classroom teacher(s) will communicate with the in-school administration and, if appropriate, contact the parent/caregivers of each student involved to inform them of the incident and how it is being handled.*
6. *The classroom teacher(s) will monitor the action plan, keep the in-school administration and parents/caregivers informed and update the filed report if the incident has been resolved.*
7. *When efforts to stop the bullying are unsuccessful, the in-school administration or the classroom teacher(s) will request separate meetings with the parents/caregivers of each child involved and suggests further supports and consequences to resolve the problem.*
8. *The in-school administration will follow division procedures when consequences for bullying involve suspensions or expulsions, or when follow-up includes a referral to mental health or child protection professionals or the police.*
9. *The in-school administration has a responsibility to support the individual or parent in making a decision to involve the police when the incident of may bullying qualify as a criminal offence and to follow school division protocols for such involvement.*
10. *The in-school administration and school staff have a responsibility to report cases of bullying to the police when students' or school staffs' safety is at risk or when they witness an incident of bullying that qualifies as a criminal offence.*

6. An action plan ensuring regular review and evaluation of the bullying prevention policy and related practices.

School/School Division will involve the school community including staff, students, parents and community members in a regular review of the bullying prevention policy and school level practices to determine what is working and what needs to be strengthened to reduce problems of bullying.

Appendix B
Bullying Prevention Policy Checklist

Policy Questions	Yes / No	Comments or Plan for Improvement
Does your school division have a comprehensive strategy to prevent and reduce bullying?		
Are students given an opportunity to have input into policies and practices related to the prevention and reduction of bullying?		
Are professional development opportunities and resources provided to address the problem of bullying?		
Are parents and community members given an opportunity to have input into policies and practices related to the prevention and reduction of bullying?		
Does your school division strategy include an education component to increase awareness and understanding of bullying?		
Does your strategy include the use of empirically-based interventions at the school level?		
Does your school division have a specific policy to address the problem of bullying among youth?		
Do schools in your division have specific policies in place at the school level to address bullying that align with the division policy?		
Do your school/division policies affirm the right of all children and youth to a caring, respectful and safe school environment?		
Do your school/division policies specify that bullying in any form will not be tolerated?		
Do your school/division policies define bullying?		
Do your school/division policies specify the roles and responsibilities of school division personnel and school/community members for dealing with bullying?		
Do your school/division policies specify the procedures and processes to be followed for responding to instances of bullying?		
Are your school/division policies and practices to prevent and reduce bullying evaluated on a regular basis?		
Are your school/division policies in this area made available to all members of the school community?		

Appendix C
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